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beliefs of the Southern Negroes as a whole. Indeed, they have actually ceased to take seriously many of the old-time superstitions because of the influence which Penn School has had. Undoubtedly there are still some people who patronize "root doctors" or "cunjuh men" in order to procure charms of various sorts and to get "spells" or "voodoo" put on their enemies. There are also some who actually use the folk remedies for various ills, and there are some who plant crops and kill hogs according to lunar phases. But the general status of the island culture as far as superstition is concerned is not very far below the level of the more backward white groups in this country. A surprisingly large proportion of the Negro folk beliefs found in the South is of European descent, and this holds true for the beliefs of the St. Helena Island Negroes.

Following are some of the traditional folk beliefs which seem to be actually practiced to some extent. Midwives, without the patient's knowledge, sometimes put a hoe or plow point or an ax under the bed to cut the after-pains attending child-birth. It is also thought that if the patient will drink tea made from gizzard which has been dried and powdered, or tea made from the nest of the mud dauber, the after-pains will be reduced. Most families try to pay the midwife promptly for her services, for it is believed that failure to pay may cause her eyes, or even her mind, to be affected. Sometimes a Bible or a broom may be seen lying on the pillow above the head of a sick person. This is supposed to prevent the spirits from taking the person away. Mrs. King, the community nurse, stated that she has occasionally had to combat the use of such remedies as cow excreta and vinegar heated for boils,

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among my earliest playmates, and during my whole life his attachment never varied. I shall gratify myself by placing a stone on his grave.[57]

INFANT WELFARE

The children's diseases were sometimes more disastrous than cholera or dysentery, despite the general precautions observed in caring for the plantation children. Planters usually insisted that the young be given special attention, and they also urged mothers to take proper care of themselves during pregnancy. Henry A. Middleton, Jr., would not permit any woman to work on his island lands in midwinter, and he immediately put *enceinte* women on half task until confinement. Every planter who had a hospital for his people insisted that the mothers come there for confinement, for there they could be better cared for and kept more quiet, but the women invariably preferred their own houses where they could gossip with their friends without restraint, and they usually managed, as Couper told Sir Charles Lyell, to be taken by surprise at home. Mothers were allowed a month of rest after confinement, an advantage rarely enjoyed by hard-working English peasants, and were not put at full tasks until the child was eight months old.

Doctors were seldom called at the confinement of a Negro woman,[58] for the woman's mistress herself seldom received such attention. In every group of plantation slaves there were one or more midwives listed on the plantation record as the "granny," or nurse, but known

[57] *Ibid.*

[58] MS in Hawks Letters, Library of Congress. Dr. J. M. Hawks to Esther Hawks, May 17, 1862, from Edisto Island: "In midwifery here, Drs. are not called, several births have occurred since I have been here all attended by the Negro women on the place."

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to the people themselves by the respectful title of Maum. The mistress herself or the overseer's wife was also usually present to assist the midwife at the confinement of a Negro woman. At Christmas the planter rewarded the granny by giving her 75 cents for each delivery during the year. He also might seek to encourage the mother to care for her child properly by giving her, perhaps, as much as a $1 for every living child she had at Christmas. Henry A. Middleton, Jr.'s, practice was to give every woman with an infant one month old $1 and the same amount to every woman with a year-old child. At Christmas in 1859, he rewarded twenty-six mothers with month-old infants, and fourteen mothers with year-old infants.[39]

St. Helena planters allowed new-born infants "two of each garment and six diapers."[40] The garments were flannel dresses, dresses of cotton checks, and jackets of homespun.[41]

As soon as a mother resumed work after confinement, she was often required to take her infant to a nurse or granny, whose task it was to take care of both the "lap babies" and the "knee babies" during working hours. Sometimes the same granny looked after the plantation babies year after year, while on other plantations this task was assigned to a group of women who took turns every month "minding child." Henry A. Middleton, Jr., rewarded the "monthly nurses" on his plantation "75c. for infants that live." As long as a mother suckled her infant, she left her work in the field at stated intervals to do so, or an older child brought the baby to the field to be fed.

[39] Wechaw Plantation Book.
[40] *Port Royal Letters*, p. 44.
[41] Wechaw Plantation Book.